

The Doctrine and Fellowship of CHRIST
and his APOSTLES:

OR,

17.
The Saints universal License and Warrant for
Social Worship, in any Number, at any
Time, and in any Place; together with the
grand Doctrine of the Gospel and the Li-
berty of its Ministers, to preach it every
where, and to all Men.

BEING THE
S U B S T A N C E
O F
TWO DISCOURSES

FROM

MATT. xviii. 20. and ACTS v. 42.

Lately Preached

At the Opening of a New MEETING-HOUSE
at *Hampstead.* *h*

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References

W. E. DISCOVERIES



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S E R M O N I.

MATT. xviii. 20.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

THE disciples having discovered by the question which they had asked, ver. 1 of this chap. that they still retained their carnal and mistaken notions of the Messiah's kingdom, and were therefore desirous of pre-eminence one above another; our Lord, in order to undeceive them, and give a seasonable check to their worldly spirit of pride and ambition, immediately teaches them (by the instance of a little child set in the midst of them) the self-mortifying doctrine of humility; and that it behoved them, as his disciples, to lay aside all their aspiring views after worldly grandeur, riches, and honour: and having thus plainly declared that the spirit which they had discovered was altogether inconsistent with the nature of his kingdom, and that none could be a subject of it, who was not converted, and become as a little child, ver. 2, 3. he directly adds, in answer to their question, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." ver. 4. Thus the way to

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honour,

honour, or before honour, is humility; he then goes on to shew his own and his Father's special love towards, and care over, such believing subjects of his kingdom, who because they are humble in heart, and little in their own eyes, may with propriety, be resembled by little children, and are therefore called little ones; but though little in their own sight, and little by way of contempt in the eyes of the world, yet they are high in CHRIST's esteem. For he declares, that he will take all favours and kindneses done to them for his sake, as done unto himself; and on the contrary, that he will reckon all scandals and evils done against them, as done against himself; and that he will certainly avenge their wrongs, ver. 6. Then he immediately adds, that great evils and judgments will befall the world, because of such offences, who will gladly take occasion to slight and harden themselves against CHRIST's gospel, and speak evil of the way of truth, because of the scandals falsely raised, and injuries done to the saints, by their enemies; but especially he pronounces a woe against the authors of the offence, who shall by lying and false reports, or by the apostacy of false brethren misrepresent, or cruelly oppress them, ver. 7. And then he warns all his followers against keeping any lust which might be an offence to themselves; exhorting and commanding them readily to part with, and effectually to mortify, whatever is most dear and valuable to them in this world (which, in a parallel place, ch. v. 29, 30. he metaphorically calls a right hand, or a right eye) rather than by the keeping of them to indanger the loss or damnation of their souls, ver. 8, 9. He therefore that will follow CHRIST, and get safe to heaven, must spare no idol, no darling lust whatsoever.—He goes on to inform us, that

SERMON I.

that these little ones who believe in him are ever attended by some of the holy angels ^a, whom God hath appointed to minister unto them and for them; and that he himself came from heaven for their sakes, who were lost, that he might save them from their guilty and helpless state of sin and misery (in which by nature all his true disciples acknowledge themselves to be) and that when he hath once found and brought them into the fold of his church, he rejoices over them with great joy ^b; and therefore neither he nor his father will suffer one of them to be lost again or perish ^c; ver. 11—14. See then that ye despise not, nor offend one of these little ones. Afterwards he gives instructions to his disciples how to act one towards another, in case there should happen any private quarrels or offences among themselves, who are brethren. And 1. he directs the offended brother to tell the offender of his fault privately, and argue the matter with him by himself alone, (without making it public, or mentioning it to any other person) if by this means he may be brought to a due sense of his error, and repent: but if he refuse to hearken to this private admonition; then, 2. he is directed to take two or three more with him, both to be witnesses, if there should be occasion for it, as also to endeavour by their mutual help and advice to bring him to repentance: but if he still refuse to hear them likewise; then, and only then, he is, in the third place, directed and commanded to tell it to the church, or that christian society to which the offending party belongs; and if after being argued with, and duly reprov'd by his brethren in public,

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^a 2 Kings vi. 16, 17. Acts v. 19 and xii. 7, &c. Heb. i. 14. ^b Isa. lxii. 4, 5. Zeph. iii. 17. ^c John x. 28, 29.

he continues obstinate and refuses to hear the church, let him then be excommunicated, or cast out of the church, and be no more esteemed a member of it and a christian brother (except he repent) but as a hardened infidel, or the most scandalous sinner, even as an heathen man or a publican, who manifestly live in error under the power of sin and satan, ver. 15, 16, 17. Our Lord then goes on to assure them that their dealing thus with an offending brother for this, or any other notorious offence, shall not be an impotent vain censure of man's judgment, but being done according to his word, and by his authority, it shall be ratified in heaven. If you cast them out of the church militant, GOD will cast them out of the church triumphant; and if upon their true repentance you receive them in again, GOD will receive them in again: "For verily I say unto you whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven:" ver. 18. because you have both my warrant and commandment for it, and my word and Spirit to guide you in it. And he further adds, GOD will not only grant you your scriptural requests, and confirm your righteous judgment in your more public church-acts and censures; but if any of you on earth shall agree to ask or do any thing according to my word and the will of GOD, it shall be granted, and done for you of my father which is in heaven; ver. 19. and then in the words of the text he assigns the grand reason why their prayers are ever heard, their decrees confirmed, and their petitions granted; "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

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In these words are manifestly contained both a direction and encouragement to social worship, whereby all christians are warranted, directed, and encouraged to assemble themselves and meet together for religious purposes in the name of the LORD JESUS; that by the means of hearing GOD's word, and prayer, together with other instituted divine ordinances, their souls may be mutually further'd and edified in faith and love which is in CHRIST JESUS. In whatever place men are assembled, and be their number ever so small, though but two or three only; yet for their encouragement and comfort CHRIST here assures them, that if they are met in his name, he himself is in the midst of them: *there* am I, saith CHRIST; he doth not say, *there* I *may* be, or *there* I *shall* or will be hereafter; but *there am* I, as one already gone before to receive and welcome them at their coming; or rather, "No sooner are they come together in my name, but I am there also; they shall not be a moment before me nor without me: My Spirit and Presence shall go along with them, and I am and will be in the midst of them."

In further discoursing on these words, I shall endeavour,

I. To shew what is meant by the name of CHRIST.

II. When persons may be said to meet together in his name, and who they are that do so.

III. I shall attempt to prove, that the smallest number, thus met in CHRIST's name, have his presence ever with them.

IV. That in whatever place these are assembled, CHRIST (who is no more a respecter of places than of persons) is always in the midst of them.

Lastly, I shall conclude with a suitable application and inferences.

First then I shall endeavour to shew, what is meant by the name of CHRIST.—By his name is often meant his authority and power^d. But the name of CHRIST generally signifies that which he is by nature or by office. The first respects his essential deity, the second his mediatorial undertaking and office as GOD-man in one CHRIST: therefore he is often called Jehovah, both GOD and LORD, because by nature he is Jehovah, *over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

My name, saith God, that is, my essential attributes, my nature, my deity, is in him: ^e “His name, saith Isaiah, shall be called, the mighty God, the everlasting Father^f:” that is, he shall be called so because he truly is so. Again, “they shall call his name Immanuel, that is, God with us^g:” for, as Paul expresses it, he was “GOD manifested in flesh^h.” With respect to creation and providence, in the support and government of the world, “his name is called the word of GODⁱ,” even “the word that was with GOD, and was GOD^k,” for all things were made “by him; he spake and it was done, he commanded and they were created.” Thus by faith we understand from the scriptures, that the worlds, both visible and invisible, were brought into being, and framed by the commanding voice of the second person in the godhead, who is therefore called the word of GOD: Peter also testifies, that “by the WORD of GOD the heavens were of old, and by
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^d Mark xvi. 17. Acts iv. 7 and 10. ⁱ Cor. v. 4.

^e Exod. xxiii. 21. ^f Isaiah ix. 6. ^g Mat. i. 23.

^h 1 Tim. iii. 16. ⁱ Rev. xix. 13. ^k John i. 1.

“ the *same* WORD are they now sustained and kept
 “ in store against the day of judgment¹:” This
 is GOD’s only begotten son (the WORD that was
 made flesh to take away our sins) “ whom he
 “ hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also
 “ he made the worlds, who being the brightness
 “ of the Father’s glory, and the express image of
 “ his person, and upholding all things by the word
 “ of his power, when he had by himself purged
 “ our sins, sat down on the right hand of the
 “ majesty on high^m.” Hence also he hath the
 name “ Jehovah our righteousnessⁿ,” because he
 is Jehovah, and is also (by his incarnation and
 obedience unto death for our sakes) made of GOD
 unto us righteousness^o.— By office he is the ap-
 pointed saviour of mankind. “ We have seen,
 “ saith John, and do testify, that the Father sent
 “ the Son to be the saviour of the world;” and as
 such, JESUS is his proper name, for he is the saviour
 of sinners, and there is none else: This is the name
 that was given him by the angel before he was
 born of the virgin: “ Thou shalt call (saith he)
 “ his name JESUS,” and then he assigns the reason
 for it, “ because he shall save his people from their
 sins^p.” JESUS signifies a saviour, and therefore
 he was called by that name.—And this name which
 GOD the Father hath given him is said to be above
 every name. Such wisdom, love and power, were re-
 quisite to save sinners, that none in heaven or earth
 but the Son of GOD only, was found worthy or able to
 engage in that glorious work, and to finish it: there-
 fore at the name of JESUS he hath commanded every
 knee to bow, both of things in heaven, and things
 on the earth, and things under the earth; and that
 every

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 5, 6, 7. ^m Heb. i. 3, 4. ⁿ Jer. xxiii. 6.
^o 1 Cor. xi. 30. ^p Matth. i. 21.

every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is Lord unto the glory of GOD the Father⁹. Thus JESUS is the name which GOD hath given, and properly belongs to his only begotten Son, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. He is also called CHRIST, that is, the anointed, signifying that GOD hath called, fitted and appointed him, and no other, to be the saviour of the world. In this respect GOD hath rejected all in heaven and earth as unworthy, and hath chosen, and with the Holy Ghost anointed, and sealed the son of his love to be the saviour of fallen men. — Thus JESUS of Nazareth is the true Messiah, (promised in the scriptures of the prophets) the CHRIST, the Son of GOD, “whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead^r.” And from hence it appears that the Son of GOD, the saviour of men, possesses two distinct natures, the one divine, and the other human, and that he is *very God*, and *very man*, in *one person*: as GOD he was able to bear that amazing load of guilt which millions of men by sin had contracted, and to make an infinite and everlasting satisfaction for it: As man, he was capable of obeying, dying, and being made a curse for us. CHRIST as man obeyed and died; whilst as GOD he sustained himself under his sufferings, and infinitely merited redemption for his people: wherefore he saith, “There is no GOD besides me, “a just GOD and a saviour: look unto me, and be “ye saved, all ye ends of the earth: for I am GOD, “and there is none else^s.”

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⁹ Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.

^r Acts xiii. 32. 33. *ibid.* xvii.

31. ^s Isa. xlv. 21, 22.

The name JESUS then is a general name of office, which is peculiar and proper to CHRIST, the Son of GOD, because he is the Saviour of mankind, and there is no other: but in this name are contained three particular and distinct offices, viz. that of a *prophet*, *priest*, and *king*. He that is anointed to be the Saviour of the world as CHRIST is, must needs be anointed to execute these three distinct offices (and because of this anointing with the holy Spirit, he is called CHRIST) else he could not be a perfect Saviour. For the condition of fallen man is such as stands in need of help in all these respects; his ignorance, guilt, and slavery require it: but CHRIST is of GOD anointed to perform and execute each of them, that he might be a suitable and complete Saviour of his people. Thus by his name JESUS CHRIST, he is made known to us as the Saviour of men, whom GOD hath anointed, and sent into the world, that he might be for salvation unto the ends of the earth: and “whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed.”

Secondly, I proposed to shew, when persons may be said to meet together in his name, and who they are that do so.—Now, to meet in CHRIST’s name is, 1st, by his authority and power, having his word and warrant for it: and if it be asked, who are the persons that have this scripture-warrant and authority from CHRIST to assemble in his name? I answer, All sorts and all degrees of persons whatsoever, yea, whosoever will, may associate and meet together in the name of CHRIST: and let who will condemn them for it, CHRIST, who is Lord of all, will justify them in it, and is himself in the midst of them, and will protect and countenance them by his Spirit and presence: and at his second coming

coming he will openly confess and acknowledge them to be his peculiar people, that have served him and done his will on earth. Of such he speaks in the prophet Malachi; "And they shall be mine," saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Nor hath any man, potentate, or power upon earth, any right, warrant, or authority, to hinder, disturb, or distress those that are met together in the name of CHRIST; and whosoever at any time attempts it, and doth it, is reckoned and determined already to be an opposer and enemy of CHRIST himself, who will render tribulation to them that trouble his saints, and will destroy them with an everlasting destruction at his second appearing and his kingdom; for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords. "When the Lord JESUS shall be revealed, in flaming fire with his mighty angels," then shall all the kings, judges, and great ones of the earth, and all of every rank and degree, who have hated, disturbed, and persecuted his saints, "cry unto the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Their present excuse and pretence for so doing, (viz. that they are met in mean and unlicensed places contrary to the customs and laws of professing churches; cities, or nations; or that they were suspected of concerting measures, and holding combinations treasonable and injurious to the peace of the community, which the true servants of CHRIST never did, or can do) then, I say, their present excuse will appear frivolous and vain, and their pretences for molesting CHRIST's worshippers and people a gross falsehood: it will then be made manifest

manifest (as the scripture now testifies) that enmity against GOD, and hatred of his CHRIST, was the only cause of all the evil which the children of men have willingly and wilfully done against the saints of the Most High; for the best and most peaceable of all subjects in any kingdom upon earth, are the faithful subjects and servants of JESUS CHRIST, from whom they have received liberty and commandment to meet together in any place, at any time, and in whatever number, few or many, provided they meet in his name: who then can forbid, or endeavour to hinder them, without being guilty of rebellion against the LORD, and fighting even against GOD?

2dly, To meet in CHRIST's name is to meet for the purposes that he hath appointed and commanded; not for envy and strife, not for sedition or mischief to any man; but for the furtherance of the gospel; that by means of reading and hearing the word of GOD, with prayer and thanksgiving, together with seasonable admonition and exhortation, believers may be warned not to depart from the faith, nor turn aside to crooked ways; but to continue in the grace of GOD, and be built up on their most holy faith, and that they may know how to bear one another's burdens, provoking unto love and good works; as also that, by the faithful preaching of his word, sinners may be converted unto GOD, and believers be the more added to the LORD. At their assemblies likewise they publicly own and confess CHRIST before men, that he is the only LORD and Saviour, very and eternal GOD, as well as true and very man, and that there is no Saviour besides him, no salvation in any other.

3dly, To meet in CHRIST's name is to meet in faith, relying and depending upon CHRIST alone, his redemption

redemption and intercession ; both for remission of sins, acceptance with God, and constant supplies of the Spirit of grace ; which through his name is promised to believers to help their infirmities, and to guide them into all truth : hereby they plainly declare, that all their hope of eternal life is grounded upon, and springs alone from the death and resurrection of CHRIST ; and that all their expectations of being heard of God, so as to be kept and delivered from sin, the world and satan, and to be furthered and established in every good word and work, is from his intercession for them at the right hand of God. This is the manner that they, which truly meet in CHRIST's name, pray and give thanks to God for all things in the name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST ; thereby declaring, that we have nothing to procure our pardon and justification before God but CHRIST's blood and righteousness only, and that without CHRIST we can do nothing to help forward or keep us in our way heaven-ward : and thus the Father is glorified in the Son by all that truly meet in his name : For then we heartily acknowledge that our righteousness and strength is in CHRIST, and that he is the author and finisher of our faith, and that all our disposition and ability for good works is of God's free grace which is only promised and communicated thro' CHRIST to our souls, and is actually given to all believers for his name sake, and by the faith of him. Now thus to meet in faith relying only upon CHRIST, and expecting all things from God through CHRIST, and again giving thanks for all things by CHRIST, is I suppose that which, in the text, is principally meant and intended by meeting in his name.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, I proceed to shew that the smallest number, though but two or three only who are thus met in CHRIST's name, have his presence ever with them; CHRIST is in the midst of them.—Now although no Christian, as I suppose, will dispute the truth of this assertion, because CHRIST himself hath declared it; yet it may not be amiss to point out a few reasons for it, and why we ought most assuredly to believe it.—And, 1. He will be in the midst of them, because of his great love wherewith he loved them. CHRIST descended from heaven, and came into this world, and laid down his life for them, and if his love caused him thus to humble himself, and to suffer for them, that he might deliver them from the curse, and reconcile them unto GOD in the body of his flesh through death; much more will he take care to keep them in the way of salvation, after that he hath been at such infinite cost and pains to bring them into it: “For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to GOD by the death of his son: much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”^t Thus the love of CHRIST will ever engage and constrain him to delight to be in the midst of his people on earth, that he may keep them in their hearts near unto himself, and at last bring them to his heavenly kingdom.

2. Because it is the will of his Father, that not one of them whom he hath given him should perish; and his delight is to do the Father's will, yea, he came down from heaven on purpose to lay down his life for his sheep, whom the Father gave unto him, and it is the highest delight of GOD's only begotten son to see his Father's will done, and to do it; which he doth in bringing many sons

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^t Rom. v. 10.

unto glory, by redeeming them from all iniquity, and bringing them into a state of pardon and peace with God through faith in his blood, and leading them safe to his Father's kingdom.

3. Because they are his members, and are an essential part of his mystical body the church, and hence he delights to be, and always is in the midst of them; for the body and head are inseparably united by a vital influence subsisting between them, and the head hath the same care for the whole body; he hath the tenderest regard for every part of it, nor will he suffer the body by any means to be maimed: and the whole body is nourished and supplied with spirits, life, and strength, from the head, though by means of joints and bands, that no one member may be useless, lost, or destroyed. Therefore CHRIST, the glorious head of the church, who hears, sees, tastes, and feels for the whole body, will never leave nor forsake it.—Wherefore he saith, “because I live, ye shall live also.”

4. Because they are met in his name to glorify the Father by him; and this is CHRIST's delight, that the Father should be glorified in the salvation of sinners through his name, who, according to the will of his Father, laid down his life for us, and took it up again.

5. That he may encourage his people to meet for social worship, though but two or three only, he hath promised ever to be in the midst of them. They are often prevented from meeting many of them together in one place, either by persecution from their enemies, or by their distance from the place where greater numbers of their brethren meet in CHRIST's name; yet they may, and it is their privilege as well as their duty to desire and seek, and readily embrace every proper opportunity of meeting

meeting together (let their number be ever so small) for their souls edification, and furtherance in the faith; by godly conversation, reading the scriptures, prayer, and such like duties; for where two or three are met in his name, there am I, saith CHRIST, in the midst of them: by which words also he plainly intimates that this sometimes, if not often, would be the case with some of his saints, who, in the course of their pilgrimage, would find but few christian travellers, not perhaps above two or three in one place, who should be able and willing to meet together in his name.

6. That they might prefer social to private worship at all convenient seasons, and not neglect the assembling themselves together, whether they be many or few: because spiritual coldness and deadness, decays of brotherly love, and of zeal for God and good works, are the manifest effects of this unnecessary wilful neglect: And CHRIST wills and commands his people to be united in his love and name, to be mutually helpful and sympathizing one with another, to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep;" without envy rejoicing in one anothers joy, and so be a partaker with them; and without grudging, bearing one another's burdens as members in the same body, whereof he is the head, and they in him, as heirs together of the grace of life. This then is a special promise to saints meeting in fellowship, and evidently implies, that where wilfully omitted, without necessary let and just cause, private religious exercises will not be owned and countenanced by the presence of CHRIST; to which we may apply the words of our Lord on another occasion: "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Let not private exclude
B public

public ordinances, nor social worship be pleaded as an excuse for the neglect of private duties in their season; both are commanded by the same Lord, which being properly attended to, do mutually help and further each other, and are for the general edification and comfort of the children of GOD: but he that neglects the former, viz. social duties, is presumptuous, proud, self-willed, and in danger of falling foully, if not finally; and he that neglects the latter is a mere outside professor, and in danger of being found a hypocrite *in that day*.

7. By public meetings for social worship, the visible church of CHRIST is maintained in the world: and as they hold forth the word of life, the world is enlightened and seasoned by it; for, he saith, “Ye are the light of the world, ye are the salt of the earth.”^a So that saints, especially in their solemn assemblies, are the greatest blessing to the inhabitants of the world; they even bear up the pillars of it, for CHRIST is in midst of them and dwelleth in them: but they are particularly helpful and a blessing to each other when in CHRIST’s name they are met to pray and give thanks together.

Now if CHRIST is where two or three are met together in his name, how much more where multitudes are *thus* assembled to hear the word of the LORD, to pray and sing praises to GOD and the Lamb; if two or three sparks, when put together, are by him kept alive and kindled into a flame by means of each other, much more when their number is greatly increased: and if “A threefold cord” is not easily broken,” much less is one of a hundred fold. Therefore let all saints diligently and unweariedly attend on the public worship of GOD, and fellowship meetings one with another, whether they

^a Matth. v. 13, 14.

they be few or many; and let private duties be conscientiously observed with all constancy and fervency as in the sight of GOD: if the former is slighted, the latter will soon sink into lifeless formality, if not totally be neglected; and if the latter be left off, and disregarded, the former also will soon be counted a wearisome service, and be unprofitable to us: for these duties go hand in hand, and mutually support one another, or else they decline and fall together. God in his word hath joined them together, as hand-maids of christian duty; and no wise, no gracious man will ever attempt to disunite and put them asunder.

Fourthly; I proposed to shew, that in whatever place they are assembled in CHRIST's name, he himself is in the midst of them. As CHRIST hath prevented and removed the objection of his peoples meeting together for social worship and edification, because they may happen to be but a few that are willing or able thus to meet in his name; so here also he removes another objection as to the place of their meeting: Some might imagine, that if they could not attend the public worship of the *Temple*, or at least that of the *Synagogue*; or applying it to the modern stile and custom, to the *Cathedral* or *Parish Church*; that it would then be unlawful, or at least unprofitable, to meet together for religious purposes. But here CHRIST removes this Jewish notion; and warrants, directs and commands his people to assemble wherever they conveniently can: and he assures them, that if they meet in his name, where they are assembled, he himself is, and will be in the midst of them. Let it be a field, or meeting-house, or tabernacle, or what place soever: whether it be built for that purpose or not: if they are met in CHRIST's

name, for their furtherance in faith and love, which is according to godliness; there CHRIST is also: he hath promised it, and he will perform it. It is manifest that our Lord doth not here prefer any one place to another, but speaks with the utmost indifference as to the place in which Christians meet to worship GOD; for which the following reasons may be assigned.

1. Because no one place is in itself holier than another: indeed there have been places which by GOD's appointment and presence were on that account called holy; such as *Sinai*, before and at the giving of the law, also the land of *Canaan*, and especially the city of *Jerusalem*, and mount *Zion*, because of the *Temple* wherein GOD dwelt: likewise the mount whereon CHRIST was transfigured, is called the *holy mount*. Now these places were called holy, first, because of the special presence of GOD therein; secondly, because his people worshipped him there, and GOD himself was in the midst of them; thirdly, because the land of *Canaan* typified heaven itself; and *Jerusalem* and mount *Zion* were types of the city of CHRIST, and of the living GOD, which is called the heavenly *Jerusalem*; fourthly, because the temple was a special type of the body of CHRIST, (as also of his mystical body the church) in which GOD promised to dwell. But CHRIST the substance being now come, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, these types are vanished away and abolished: So that now there is no one place under heaven made by hands, which God hath appointed to dwell in, nor will dwell in, rather than any other: but where CHRIST is, there GOD is; and where true believers are, there is CHRIST in the midst of them. The time is long ago fulfilled of which
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our LORD spake to the woman of Samaria, saying,
 "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this
 "mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the
 "Father.—But the hour cometh, and now is,
 "when the true worshippers shall worship the
 "Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father
 "seeketh such to worship him: GOD is a spirit,
 "and they that worship him must worship him in
 "spirit and in truth."

Since then these holy places were but typical, the antitype being come, GOD hath withdrawn his special presence from them, as from Jerusalem, &c. and there is no more any holiness in them. But are not certain places under the Gospel set apart for divine worship by an episcopal consecration holier than they were before? By no means. For the appointment is not of GOD and his CHRIST, but of men; and that by a corrupt imitation of dead ceremonies, which GOD himself hath long ago abolished: moreover the patterns of things in the heavens under the law, were chiefly purified with the sprinkling of the blood of their sacrifices, which in these modern consecrations is totally omitted; which by GOD's appointment ever was and ever will be an essential part of the purification both of persons and places, whether carnally by types and shadows under the law; or spiritually in reality and truth under the gospel. Neither are there any symbols and tokens of the divine presence and approbation attending these *papal* or *episcopal* consecrations. But when the Jewish tabernacle and temple, with its furniture, were consecrated by their priests (at GOD's commandment) with the typical blood of beasts, &c. GOD manifested his divine approbation, and then they were specially sanctified by the immediate presence and

visible glory of the GOD of Israel :^w so that those places were in a relative and typical sense eminently holy, as we said before. But as they were set apart and sanctified for GOD's peculiar service only with a view to CHRIST, to be a worldly sanctuary and temporal figure of his incarnation and oblation, and entering into heaven itself with his own blood (together with the redemption and sanctification, and glorification of his church and people, by his blood and Spirit) the holiness of those places in any sense whatever, is now determined and come to an end. Besides, none but the Jewish priests, since the time of Moses, had ever any warrant and command from GOD to sanctify and consecrate places of worship to his name; had any of the Gentiles pretended to it, they would have done it presumptuously; but now the thing signified thereby being come, viz. the true tabernacle of CHRIST's body, the true sacrifice of himself to GOD for the sins of many, who with his blood is entered into heaven itself, whereby he hath obtained eternal redemption for them, and secured heaven to them; Who then, I say, can now revive these abolished carnal shadows in any sense, without being guilty of implicitly denying that CHRIST is come in the flesh, or that he hath finished the work which the Father gave him to do?

2. It is the word, Spirit, and presence of GOD and his CHRIST alone, that constitutes and makes any person or place, in any sense whatever to be holy. By his word he commands it, by his Spirit he makes it holy, and by his presence he declares it to be so: no consecrating act therefore of any priest by any means whatever, can make any place holy which GOD doth not by his word appoint, and by
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^w Exod. xxix. 43, 44;

his Spirit and presence make to be so. And I know of no place which in his word he hath declared to be holier than any other upon earth, or by his presence manifests to be so, since the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the Jewish worldly sanctuary, and service; but in every place where his saints and faithful servants are met together in his name, there CHRIST is; and, for that reason, so long as they continue to meet in his name, and during the time of their being assembled, but no longer, may that place be called holy; for CHRIST both comes, and departs with them: for the place is not holy by any consecrating act, but as it were eventually, because his people happen occasionally or statedly there to meet to worship GOD, and have CHRIST in the midst of them; for it is not the place, but the persons and hearts of his worshipers that he sanctifies, in whom also he dwells, by his word and Spirit, through faith. Now these, even the people, which he hath sanctified with his own blood, are the church and temple of GOD, whereof CHRIST, as man and mediator, is Lord and head. And it matters not where *these* are met to worship GOD; for in whatever part of the world, in Britain, Germany, or America; in whatever place, licensed or unlicensed, whether with or without a steeple; they have not only warrant from GOD's word *there* to meet, but CHRIST himself is also with them. Therefore his apostle St. Paul acknowledges for his christian brethren, and wishes grace and peace, "unto all that *in every place* call upon the name of "our LORD JESUS CHRIST, both theirs and ours."^x And it were to be wished that many of the ignorant people of this land, were undeceived in this, as well as in many other vulgar errors; and not

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deluded,

z 1 Cor. i. 2.

deluded, and blindly suffered to imagine that the place, and not themselves, are the church; whereby they are led ignorantly and superstitiously to have a blind zeal for the empty place; supposing it to be peculiarly holy as the actual sanctuary of God; and at the same time are as ignorant, as they are negligent, concerning the necessity of their own personal holiness, and that they themselves, if Christians, are the very church and temple of the living God: and their ignorance herein is the parent of much bitter zeal, calumny, persecution, cruelty, and of many gross immoralities, productive of the most fatal consequences. Such zealots would do well to consider the words of the prophet, which Stephen once applied to their Jewish brethren, whom he calls "stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears:" The words are these; "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: What house will ye then build unto me, saith the Lord? or what is the place of my rest? hath not my hands made all these things?"

These persons, in their blind zeal, are very apt also to charge the guilt of schism upon many that are wholly innocent of the matter, and to brand them with the name of schismatics, because they are not of their church communion, when they themselves are at the same time notoriously guilty of it; for the word *Σχισμα*, *Schism*, (which we suppose, is generally misunderstood and misapplied) in Matt. ix. 16. and Mar. ii. 21. simply means a rent in a garment; which may be, and generally is, without an entire separation of any part from it: And when this word is applied to the minds and actions of men in matters of religion; I cannot find that it ever signifies a proper, or total separation

tion of any one or more members from the body of that church or society to which they belong ; but only a contentious rent, or division among them, whilst at the same time, they continue together in one and the same communion : Neither is schism, a division and strife about any *essential article*, or *doctrine of faith* ; but a separation in sentiment or opinion only, attended with verbal dissensions about persons or things indifferent, which themselves allow not to be essential in religion : yet as it is sinful in itself, and is often the parent of greater evils, through the pride of men, by their mutually galling and wounding one another ; and is sometimes productive even of *heresies*, which the apostle intimates in 1 Cor. xi. 19. it ought to be most diligently opposed, and carefully avoided : but if at any time an entire separation from the church or communion to which a person belongs should take place, (which ought never to be done but when a professing church maintains or countenances fundamental errors in principle or practice) yet this separation is not what is called schism in scripture, or what is meant by it : as is plain from those passages where the word occurs : See John vii. 43. and ix. 16. and x. 19. 1 Cor. i. 10. and xi. 28. and xii. 25. These I think are the only places where the word is found in the New Testament. It is therefore a manifest misapplication, and abuse of the word, (calculated only to frighten the vulgar, and deceive the ignorant) when the Protestants are by the Papists called *Schismatics*, or when some of the church of England give the same odious name to any of the Dissenters ; for the schism is rather among themselves, whilst they hold together in one communion, and yet are so divided in their opinions as to be contentious, and to quarrel one with another :

another: This then is what the scripture calls schism, viz. When members of the same body are at variance, divided and contending one against another about matters indifferent, and circumstantial, whether it relates to persons or things: for the Jews, in their schisms or dissensions concerning CHRIST, were only divided in their opinion about him, without separating from the Jewish church, or becoming his disciples. So likewise in the schisms of the church at Corinth; the brethren there did not leave the church of CHRIST, or separate themselves into different societies, and congregations; but were only divided in their sentiments, and had contentions about their preachers, as Paul and Peter, &c. (though some of them indeed began to entertain *heresies*, such as denying the resurrection of the body.) But as such kind of strifes and divisions are contrary to the gospel of GOD, who hath called us to peace, and hath forbid us to glory in men; it behoves all the true and faithful followers of CHRIST to lay them aside, and avoid them. — But if the Protestants are not schismatics by separating from the church of Rome; yet the Papists will, and do affirm, that we are heretics; but this charge is as groundless and false as the former: for *heresy* is an error in the foundation of religion; which a man that is an heretic falls into, and embraces of his own voluntary choice, and willingly maintains, and obstinately defends: “He therefore, saith the apostle, that is such, is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself;” that is, he sinneth not through infirmity, but of choice, wilfully shutting his eyes against the evidence of truth; and had rather continue in his heresy, than be convinced and brought out of it: But no man can be justly charged with
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this sin that doth not worship idols, nor deny the deity of JESUS CHRIST, nor the scripture-doctrine of justification by faith alone in his blood, nor the necessity of holiness in heart and life; and that doth not hold any other doctrine that is naturally and necessarily destructive of any of them. And it is certain that no true Protestant holds any of these heresies; though it is notorious that the Papists hold many of them. Thus both the sect of the Sadducees, and the sect of the Pharisees, falsely charged the apostles and christians of old with the guilt of heresy, when at the same time the sin lay at their own door, and the scripture charges them with it, Acts v. 17. and xxvi. 5. In like manner are the Protestants now condemned, as heretics, by the Papists, when themselves alone are guilty of the charge: for by them especially damnable heresies have been brought into the church, and
“ many, as it was prophesied of old, have followed,
“ and do yet follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth is evil spoken
“ of.” 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2. And therefore it behoved us to come out from amongst them, lest by being partakers of their sins, we should be also partakers of their plagues. But this our separation from the Papists is no separation from the true church of CHRIST, and of the living GOD: whose faith and practice is fully revealed and described in the holy scriptures; touching all points both of doctrine and discipline which are necessary to salvation, and to the peace and edification of the church. Therefore all true Protestants may, on this occasion, adopt the words of St. Paul, when he vindicated himself from the same charge brought against him by the Jewish high priest and council: for we confess, as he did,
“ That after the way which they call heresy, so
“ worship

“ worship we the GOD of our fathers ;” even the LORD GOD of the holy prophets and apostles.

The plain truth therefore is, that as the Jewish, so the Romish church hath fundamentally erred, and is departed from the faith and doctrine of the holy scripture : hence every true church of CHRIST, and every one that would be saved, must needs separate from her ; whose abominable idolatries and doctrines of Devils ; whose rejection of the scripture doctrine of justification by faith alone in CHRIST JESUS, and establishment of the contrary doctrine of the merit of man’s own righteousness, &c. &c. fully demonstrate, and prove her to be guilty of that heresy with which she falsely charges those Christians who are separated from her. And it is not only lawful, but the bounden duty of all true christians to separate themselves from every professing church, that holds and obstinately defends any fundamental error : for “ what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, or “ what concord hath CHRIST with Belial ?” Wherefore “ come out from amongst them, and be ye “ separate, saith the LORD.”

If it be said, that the protestants are divided into factions and parties among themselves, so that they cannot agree to hold an outward communion and fellowship one with another ; yet as the difference, in general, is not about fundamentals, whatever they may be charged with, they cannot, on that account, be justly charged with *schism*, or *heresy* : but this we confess, that the scripture knows of no allowed difference in communion among the true worshippers and professing people of GOD ; who hold the head CHRIST, and unitedly agree in the fundamentals of faith and practice : and whoever on any other account refuses to admit, or to hold communion

communion with their Christian brethren, are, I humbly conceive, worthy of reproof, and cannot, in this their practice, be justified from the scripture, either by precept or example. And I think also, that it manifestly tends to break the visible order and peace of the churches of CHRIST, which in spirit and faith are always firmly united. Those then that are *inwardly* united and have fellowship in the *spirit*, should not be *outwardly* divided and at variance in the *letter*: for CHRIST, who is their common Lord, and a head of influence to all that are partakers of the common faith and hope of the gospel, holds communion with them all (that in every place call upon his name in truth and love) and they with him: wherefore he saith, “where
“two or three are gathered together in my name,
“there am I in the midst of them.”

Were Christians then of all denominations to place their religion, not in the difference of places where they assemble, not in the transient circumstances of it, nor in the mere external form and modes of discipline and order wherein they differ; but in the substantial and essential parts of the religion of JESUS CHRIST, consisting in faith, and love, and holiness, wherein they all agree: was this, I say, the case, none would be condemned, despised and insulted by their brethren for attending at different places where CHRIST is preached unto them, and where GOD is worshipped in spirit and in truth; nor for any other circumstantial difference in modes of shadows and forms of order: but those among the various dissenting denominations of Protestants would cease to condemn their Christian brethren of the establishment; and those again of the church of England would not despise and censure their dissenting brethren; seeing that, and that
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alone, wherein they are agreed, constitutes them Christians; and that wherein they differ makes them neither the more nor less so: because it is only their being truly met in CHRIST's name which constitutes either of them a Christian church or assembly; and their living by faith in CHRIST, confessing his name, walking in the fear of GOD, and in love to men, especially to the saints; is that alone which declares and manifests them to be Christians indeed; both in heart before GOD, and in life before men.

Thus the place where Christians meet is in no sense whatever any part of the church, but they themselves are the church of CHRIST, which he hath purchased, and sanctifies with his own blood; and wherever these are assembled in his name, there is CHRIST, their living head and LORD; who gave himself for his whole church, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word:" and every one of these, when they are effectually called, and regenerated, are truly and vitally united, by the Spirit, to CHRIST, their glorious Head; so as to become an essential part of the temple of the living GOD: wherefore he saith, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their GOD, and they shall be my people." And as they who are yet scattered abroad continue to be called, and gathered by the word and spirit of truth, into the knowledge and fellowship of CHRIST; the whole building increaseth, and groweth into an holy temple in the LORD; in whom all saints, of every denomination, are builded together for an habitation of GOD thro' the Spirit. Now of this temple, CHRIST as a living stone, is placed for the only and sure foundation,

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to whom all his people coming are, when they come, made living stones by CHRIST, and being united to him, are built up a spiritual house: so then the whole church, comprehending the several assemblies and parts of it, as so many members of CHRIST's mystical body, both in heaven and earth, is together, and in union with CHRIST, their common Lord and Head; the one, true, only temple of the living GOD. This body of CHRIST is his fulness, and is that holy catholic or universal church "which GOD hath purchased with his own blood." And these, wherever they are, and whoever they be, are, and shall be united to CHRIST, and made one with him, by the eternal Spirit; and hence they become and are called the body of CHRIST, and members in particular; the saints and faithful in CHRIST JESUS. Therefore I heartily concur with the XIXth article of the church of England, which saith; that "the visible church of CHRIST is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of GOD is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered, according to CHRIST's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

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Here you see the church of CHRIST, is not a place built of perishing materials, such as wood, and stone, &c. with a tower or steeple on it, but a congregation of faithful men, i. e. of persons who believe in CHRIST, and stedfastly adhere to him, relying upon CHRIST alone for salvation; proving at the same time the truth and sincerity of their faith in CHRIST, by a holy walk and godly conversation.

2. In this church wherever it is found, the pure word and gospel of GOD is preached; not the commandments and traditions of men, not the morality

morality of heathen infidels, who knew not **GOD**, nor obeyed the gospel: but in this church of **CHRIST** the pure word and gospel of **GOD** is preached, and on this account the church is called, and is the “pillar and ground of the truth.”^a

3. In this church, “the sacraments, i. e. baptism and the **LORD**’s supper, be duly administered according to **CHRIST**’s ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same;” which as to the former, viz. baptism, neither the circumstances of time, nor any particular mode, are essentially requisite, or necessary to the due administration of it; but this only I conceive to be necessary, wherein all true christian protestants are agreed, i. e. with water solemnly to baptise the person, either by washing, or sprinkling, or immersion in the name of the **LORD JESUS**. And as to the latter ordinance, viz. the **LORD**’s supper, neither kneeling nor sitting, nor any particular quality or quantity of bread or wine, are of necessity requisite to the right receiving of the same: but a decent eating bread and drinking wine set apart for that use, as symbols, and in remembrance of the body and blood of **CHRIST**, once broken and shed for the sins of many, even of all that come to **GOD** by him. But let it be remembered that none is, nor can be a worthy partaker at this ordinance, who hath any hope or confidence towards **GOD**, but what arises from the oblation and compleat redemption of **CHRIST** only; neither can any of the faithful, unless they exercise in their hearts faith on **CHRIST** crucified, whilst they are using the visible signs of it, be spiritually refreshed and profitted in their souls by coming to the **LORD**’s table, although it is their duty and priviledge to be found attending

^a 1 Tim. iii. 15.

attending on it. Now this church of faithful men meeting in CHRIST's name, is, I doubt not, to be found in several places, among most, if not all of the various protestant denominations of christians in Europe, and in all other parts of the world where CHRIST is known, loved, and adored; and the persons constituting such congregations, whether many or few, that meet in CHRIST's name, are the church of CHRIST, and no other: whether they be Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, or by whatever other names they are distinguished, and known in the earth.

Lastly, I shall draw a few inferences from the whole.

And 1. I infer, that whosoever, and wheresoever any persons, are assembled for religious purposes, if they are not professedly and sincerely met in the name of CHRIST, he is not with them; neither are their readings, preaching, prayers, or services, at all acceptable to GOD, or pleasing in his sight: but on the contrary, they are an abomination to him. It is not the time, nor place, nor number, nor quality of persons met together, that recommends them to GOD, or makes their service acceptable to him; but CHRIST alone, his blood and Spirit doth it; whereof all that truly believe in CHRIST, are partakers.

2. Much less is CHRIST in the midst of those who are met and assembled for lewd, seditious, and wicked purposes: men that meet in order to contrive methods for persecuting the saints, and oppressing the poor; for rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying; are so far from having CHRIST among them, that they are manifestly met to oppose him; and are actually engaged in supporting the kingdom of
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fatan, by whom they are led and governed, and whom they willingly serve. In short, whosoever at any time, and for whatsoever purpose are met together, if they cannot sincerely and heartily pray, that GOD would bless and prosper them in those things for which they are met, and that CHRIST's presence may be with them (which in all lawful meetings and honest matters men ever may and ought to do) they don't meet in the name of CHRIST: and let this be a rule to you my brethren, and unto all men; that whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the LORD JESUS, as in the sight of GOD who trieth our hearts; that you may be able also to give thanks always for all things unto GOD and the Father, in the name of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

3. Neither are men met in CHRIST's name, if they do not unfeignedly believe in him, and heartily depend upon him; or if they hold the form, and deny the power of godliness: for their holding a form of sound words without mixing faith therewith, and relying upon CHRIST, will avail them nothing: they may cry, Lord, Lord, and yet regarding iniquity in their hearts, and refusing to obey his word, he will not hear them, nor be with them. David tells us that his infidel or persecuting enemies, in the time of their distress, cried unto the LORD, and he answered them not. And we read of others, who "come before him as his people, " and sit under his word and hear it, whilst in " their hearts they are going after their covetousness;" but he abhors both them and their solemn meetings: They may, as to word and form, use the very name of JESUS in their prayers, yet not believing on him, and loving him in their hearts;

hearts; CHRIST will no more support or countenance them than he did the seven sons of Sceva; who ignorantly, without faith, attempted to cast out devils in the name of JESUS, because Paul did so; but being destitute of Paul's faith, they were shamefully disappointed to their hurt and wounding: thus also, the Egyptians seeing Israel pass through the Red Sea, assayed without their faith to do the same, but perished in the attempt. For without faith it is impossible to please GOD, and he that hears, or reads his word, or prays without mixing faith therewith, is neither heard of GOD, nor profited to his soul's salvation.

4. All Christians have a plain warrant from CHRIST to meet together in any place whatsoever (and it behoves them so to do) no man having any authority from GOD to forbid or molest them: let public ordinances therefore, and fellowship meetings, be diligently attended to by all saints, and be counted their privilege as well as their duty; that they all may receive mutual edification and comfort, which they are ever encouraged from the LORD to expect, provided they meet in CHRIST's name; for such he hath promised to meet with, and always is in the midst of them. Although this building, and the people meeting in it, may be held in great contempt by many of the inhabitants of this place, because as yet they know not GOD, nor serve the LORD CHRIST; yet count it your privilege to meet here for religious purposes, and be encouraged so to do though but two or three only, for which you have free liberty and warrant, not only from the LORD CHRIST, who is "King of Kings and Lord of Lords;" but by his gracious indulgence towards us from the wholesome laws also of this land, which according to the will

and word of GOD, do tolerate and allow all Christians to meet when and where they please, without let or disturbance from lawless persons; provided we meet not for wicked and seditious purposes; but as true subjects peaceably to worship GOD, and edify one another in the faith of the gospel. But all other meetings which are treasonable against the king, hurtful to the peace of civil society, or any ways injurious to our neighbour, are by no means to be tolerated or connived at. But let none of the true disciples of CHRIST at any time engage in such worldly and pernicious combinations as these: "O, my soul, come not thou into their secrets; unto their assembly mine honour be not thou united." Remember also the words of our LORD to Peter, when with carnal weapons he would have defended him: "Put up thy sword into his sheath, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Our meeting is in the name of the prince of peace, "whose kingdom is not of this world;" all Christians therefore that truly follow CHRIST are peace-makers, and not peace-breakers: we are only to fight against sin, the flesh, and the devil. And herein CHRIST, as the captain of our salvation, is ever with us, and goes before us; but he will never support or countenance us in any other war, nor even in this, if we use carnal weapons therein: for this is the victory that overcometh the world, and sin and satan, even our faith in CHRIST and his blood. But let us carefully observe, and may it be ever remembered by us, that the stress in all our religious meetings must not at all be laid on the time or number met together; but in season, and out of season, and in any place, whether few or many, the whole for our souls profit turns on our meeting in CHRIST's name, and that the word
which

which we hear, is faithfully spoken in his name, and that we mix faith therewith: and are not many of you at this time met here in the name of CHRIST?

Is it not to hear his word, to shew your love to his name and gospel, to express your dependance on him and hope in him, and to have your souls quickened and increased in faith and love and holiness? And in thus continuing to wait on the LORD in his appointed ways for these heavenly benefits, you may expect, and will undoubtedly find your spiritual strength to be renewed: and by constantly meeting in CHRIST's precious name, your souls by the words of faith and sound doctrine, will be nourished and built up in faith and love which is in CHRIST JESUS.

Lastly, I would observe, that this building is not (as some may surmise) erected by way of opposition to any other place of divine worship whatever; but only, as far as I have heard or known, for the sake of preaching CHRIST's gospel, that sinners thereby may be converted unto GOD from the errors of their ways; and for the building up of the saints in their most holy faith: for we know that the "Gospel of CHRIST is the power" of GOD unto Salvation to every one that believeth." This gospel, Paul, though a prisoner at Rome, and that in the time of Nero, was permitted to preach publickly in his own hired house, which he did two full years, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. And this gospel, my brethren, so far as you understand, and receive and heartily embrace it, will influence and form your hearts unto all holy obedience; for it is the word of GOD's grace, which received into the heart, worketh effectually unto salvation in all them that believe it. Therefore I beseech you, if you are, or would

be thought, friends and partakers of the gospel of the blessed GOD, and his CHRIST; strive to make it manifest by walking worthy of it, in all good works, in faith and patience, humility and meekness: not seeking the preheminance one above another, but in honour preferring each to other for the LORD's sake: always endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, by mutual forbearance, long suffering and forgiveness one towards another: as your faith, so let your love, be unfeigned; not in word, and in tongue, but in deed, and in truth: love as brethren; live as Christians: by a holy, peaceable, godly walk, and conversation, stop the mouths of your enemies; if by truth and love you cannot win their hearts: thus follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD: and may you daily grow in grace, abound in the fruits of righteousness which by JESUS CHRIST are acceptable and well pleasing to GOD; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N II.

ACTS v. 42.

*And daily in the temple, and in every house, they
ceased not to teach and preach JESUS CHRIST.*

WE are told, both in this and the preceeding chapter, that the Jewish council, their chief priests and rulers, were highly offended with the apostles, because they testified that JESUS CHRIST was risen from the dead, and preached unto the people forgiveness of sins, and salvation through his name; though, at the same time, they wrought the most undoubted miracles by the name of JESUS, in confirmation of the truth of their testimony and doctrine concerning him. When therefore they had brought them before their council, and asked them by what name or by what power they had done this (i. e. healed the lame man mentioned in chap. iii. ver. 2.) Peter filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, “ Ye rulers and elders of
“ Israel; if we this day be examined of the good
“ deed done to the impotent man by what means
“ he is made whole; be it known unto you all,
“ and to all the people of Israel, that by the name
“ of JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth, whom ye cruci-
“ fied, whom GOD raised from the dead, doth

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“ this

“ this man stand here before you whole ; this is
“ the stone which was set at nought of you builders,
“ which is become the head of the corner : neither
“ is there salvation in any other, for there is no
“ other name under heaven given among men
“ whereby we must be saved.” Now, although
they were convinced of the fact, and constrained
among themselves to acknowledge it, (“ For that
“ a notable miracle hath been done by them is,
“ say they, manifest to all them that dwell in Je-
“ rusalem, and we cannot deny it,”) yet behold
the perverseness and wickedness of these men ; in-
stead of believing the apostles testimony, and en-
couraging them to go on in preaching the glad
tidings of salvation, and doing good to men in
the name of JESUS, they endeavour with all their
might to hinder and suppress it ; for they imme-
diately add, “ but that it spread no farther among
“ the people let us straitly threaten them, that they
“ speak henceforth to no man in this name :” and
they accordingly called, “ and commanded them
“ not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of
“ JESUS.” But Peter and John boldly answered and
said unto them, “ Whether it be right in the sight of
“ GOD to hearken unto you more than unto GOD,
“ judge ye ; for we cannot but speak the things
“ which we have seen and heard.” But this answer
was so close an appeal to their own judgment and
conscience ; and carried in it such a plain declara-
tion that they had commission and authority from
GOD for what they did, and the people at the same
time (for the miracle was commonly known) glori-
fied GOD for what was done ; that their rulers durst
not, for the present, inflict any punishment upon
them. Yet soon after this (because the apostles
continued to preach unto the people remission of
sins,

sins, and the resurrection from the dead in the name of JESUS,) “ they laid their hands on them, and “ put them in the common prison ;” not at all regarding the great and numberless miracles which the apostles daily wrought in confirmation of the truth of their testimony. But here the LORD himself visibly interposed on the behalf of his faithful servants, and sent his angel that same night, who opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, go stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life : the officers also who were sent the next day to the prison to bring the apostles before the chief priests and rulers, returned and told them, saying, the prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors, but when we had opened we found no man within ; but neither had this miracle any effect upon them, though for a short space they seemed to be perplexed and confounded at what was done. But the apostles being afterwards brought before them, they had even the assurance to charge them with disobedience to their command and contempt of their authority ; notwithstanding that GOD himself had so miraculously delivered them out of their hands, and commanded them not to obey the orders of these wicked rulers, who refused to own the superior authority of GOD, and the dominion of his CHRIST. But it is plain that they were determined to shut their eyes, and harden their hearts against the clearest light of GOD’s gospel, and the fullest evidence of the resurrection of JESUS : for the high priest, speaking in the name of the whole council said, “ Did not we “ straitly charge you that you should not teach in “ this name .” &c. then Peter and the other apostles answered, “ We ought to obey GOD rather than
“ Men.

“ Men. The GOD of our fathers raised up JESUS
“ whom ye slew and hanged on a tree, him hath
“ GOD exalted with his right-hand to be a prince
“ and a saviour for to give repentance to Israel,
“ and remission of sins : and we are his witnesses
“ of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost,
“ whom GOD hath given to them that obey him.
“ When they heard this they were cut to the heart,
“ and took counsel to slay them;” from which
bloody purpose they were diverted, by means of
the prudent and seasonable counsel of Gamaliel,
being one of them ; yet he could not hinder them
from beating the apostles, and commanding them
afresh not to speak in the name of JESUS.

It was the preaching of JESUS CHRIST, through
faith in his name, that the apostles, by the power
of the Spirit of GOD, wrought such miracles, and
did so much good both to the souls and bodies of
men : nor had they authority from GOD, nor did
they, nor could they perform such miracles of grace
and power by any other name, but the name of
JESUS. This name therefore, and the preaching
of JESUS CHRIST was then, and is now the grand
object of satan’s malice and hatred, as it is of infidel
men also of all ranks and degrees whatsoever ; and
that because there is salvation in him for sinful men,
and in no other : and hence the apostles were so
strictly charged and commanded not to preach in
his name : but they were so far from being silenced
or intimidated by their rulers threatnings and cru-
elty, that on the contrary, they departed from the
presence of the council, rejoicing that they were
counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of
CHRIST ; and as if they had been animated by the
opposition of their adversaries, they constantly, and
in all places, went about doing good as their Lord
had

had done before; and preaching also the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, and of salvation in the name of JESUS: for we are told in the text; “that daily in the temple, and in every house they “ceased not to teach and preach JESUS CHRIST.”

From these words I shall briefly observe the time when, and the places where the apostles preached; and this, we learn from the text, was daily, and in every place.

Secondly, I shall insist more largely upon the subject of their preaching, and this, we are expressly told, was JESUS CHRIST.

Lastly, I shall conclude with an application.

First then, It appears, that the time and place of the apostles preaching, was by no means limited and confined to any particular place or day; but on every day, and in every place without exception.

And 1, as to time, they not only preached on the sabbath, or Lord's-day, but every day, that is, on the ordinary days of the week: they were not afraid then of hurting themselves by constant preaching, nor of tiring their hearers by the frequency of it: but as they had opportunity, on all occasions, without (in this respect) preferring one day above another, they preached the gospel of CHRIST boldly and freely; nor had their doctrine the least tendency to make men idle, and negligent of their honest and necessary business; but rather it tended to dispose and enable them to do their work with cheerfulness, diligence and faithfulness; as well as to eat their bread with gladness and thankfulness of heart: if then any one should pretend that the daily preaching of God's word, when persons are or can be assembled, tends in any way, or in any degree to promote idleness and mischief; or should
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any one take occasion from thence so to be; the fault is not to be laid to the apostles doctrine, nor to the manner and times of their preaching, but to the perverseness and wickedness of men who misrepresent and abuse it; for this they commanded, if any would not work neither should he eat: and such as discovered a slothful disposition, them they exhorted, and commanded in the name of the Lord JESUS, with quietness to work and eat their own bread: therefore their preaching daily doth not mean that they preached all the day long without intermission; much less that they were heard by the same persons every day, and all the day, from morning to evening; but every day, without distinction of days, and sometimes in the day, and to different persons as they had opportunity, and met with such that were willing to hear them. This they did first promiscuously, day by day, unto all men; that all might hear, and that the rejectors of the gospel might be left without excuse; and then they or their substitutes, that is other ministers of CHRIST, met together with the church and preached unto them at proper times on any of the week-days, but especially on the Lord's-day; for the further edification, comfort, and establishment of the disciples in the knowledge of GOD and of CHRIST; when also they were instructed and exhorted how to walk so as to please GOD in all things.

Those then who pretend to hear the word of GOD, and the preaching of CHRIST, and yet are negligent of their necessary callings, so as not to provide things honest in the sight of men, as also in the sight of GOD; are forgetful hearers, and disobedient children; or are totally unacquainted with the grace of CHRIST, and perverters of the gospel of GOD: and they who under a pretence of attending their lawful business and calling are neglecters
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of CHRIST's gospel, and do not diligently and constantly attend upon the preaching and ordinances of it; have little, if any true grace in their hearts; if they do not also reject the counsel of GOD against themselves, and make light of his great salvation: on such the command of CHRIST may, and ought to be enforced; "Seek ye first the kingdom of GOD, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." And to such worldlings, and carnal professors, he saith again; "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life." Herein he warrants and commands us to take the greatest care, pains and study, for the health and salvation of the soul; which is a precept highly reasonable in itself, and most expedient: for the concerns of the soul, which are eternal, are infinitely superior to that of the body, which are only temporal: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Therefore all the lawful and honest businesses of this life are to be pursued, and minded only in way of subserviency to the soul's peace and salvation. Nor is the pursuit of any business, however lawful in itself, justifiable before GOD, nor expedient for any man; if it be not consistent with, and tending to promote the health and salvation of the soul. But if in its proper place and order the things of GOD, and the concerns of the soul, according to godliness, be first regarded; those of the body will be duly attended to, in their proper place and season also: and as the inner man grows, and is built up in the faith of CHRIST, and the love of his Spirit; the lawful and necessary business of the body, and of this life, will be diligently followed and minded, without abusing them, or being troubled with anxious cares
about

about them. Therefore the apostles preaching CHRIST daily, had in no respect an hurtful or licentious tendency; but rather it tended to promote the health and peace both of body and soul; as likewise the good of all societies, great and small, in nations or families, both civil and religious.

2. We are told that they preached in every place; both in the temple, and in every house: they counted no one place in itself holier than another; nor any place more polluted than another, so as to restrain them from some, and confine them to other places in their preaching: their business was not with places, but men: not with temples made with hands, but with immortal souls dwelling in temples of flesh and blood. Nor did they suppose that their hearers were the better or the worse for the places in which they were assembled: if they went to the temple, which they frequently did, whither the Jews were wont to resort, they did not refuse to preach to them there, tho' they had made it a den of thieves; and if they went to a private house, tho' the meanest cottage, they did not decline preaching to the people assembled therein, because it was not a stately mansion, nor a consecrated place, and typically holy as the temple once was: but in every place without exception, and without distinction, where they found persons met together, or willing, to hear the word of GOD; there they preached the glorious gospel of CHRIST; and the Spirit, presence, and power of the Lord, ever went with them, and attended their ministry, which was the most undoubted proof of his approbation of their conduct; and that he concurred with their preaching CHRIST every where, and to all men: and to this day the surest sign and evidence of any one's being approved of GOD in preaching his word to men,

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is the blessing with which he accompanies it, and the divine power with which it is attended, both for the converting of sinners, from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto GOD; as also for the further consolation, edifying, and establishment of believers in the truth, which is according to godliness. But having in the foregoing discourse treated somewhat largely of this point already; I shall not enlarge any further on it in this, but shall proceed,

Secondly; to consider what was the subject of the apostles preaching: and this, we are expressly told, was JESUS CHRIST. Now it is my design, as was before observed, to insist more especially on this head. But first let us briefly observe what the apostles did not preach; and, 1. They did not preach themselves; neither their own wisdom, power, or holiness; there is nothing like it in their doctrine, but quite the contrary: for they ever preached the faithful word of GOD, and his CHRIST; and always ascribed all their knowledge in the mystery of godliness, and all their success in preaching the gospel, to the grace of CHRIST, and the power of the Spirit of GOD, by whom alone all their miracles were wrought, and sinners converted unto GOD through the preaching of CHRIST, and the hearing of the doctrine of faith. No human learning, no philosophic knowledge, no excellency of their own, did they attempt to discover in their preaching: Neither by studied oratory; or elegant forms of speech, or profound reasonings (called by St. Paul the wisdom of men, and the wisdom of words) did they, at any time, endeavour to affect, and gain the hearts of their hearers: And this they carefully avoided, lest the cross of CHRIST (which to believers is the wisdom and power of GOD unto salvation) should
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be made of none effect; i. e. lest by substituting mans wisdom in the place of GOD's wisdom, in their preaching; they should labour in vain, and be unprofitable to their hearers: For that faith which cometh not by the hearing of CHRIST crucified, or the doctrine of salvation thro' faith in his blood; standeth, and consisteth not in the power of GOD, but in the wisdom of men only; and therefore such a faith will certainly perish, and come to nought: But that which cometh by the simple and plain preaching of CHRIST crucified, as GOD hath appointed and commanded; that faith, I say, and that alone standeth in the power of GOD, and is of grace, by the operation of his almighty Spirit; and therefore it never faileth, nor can it be overthrown. And this is the faith of GOD's elect, which Paul, and the other apostles insisted on, as GOD had appointed and commanded them, that the excellency of the power in a sinner's conversion might appear manifestly to be of GOD, and not of men; neither of him that preacheth, nor of him that heareth, that so all boasting might be excluded; and no flesh glory before GOD. The apostles therefore had nothing to do in their preaching for the conversion of sinners unto GOD; but to testify that JESUS of Nazareth was the promised CHRIST of GOD, and that he had raised him from the dead; and therefore to preach unto men pardon and life through his name. This truth they urged upon men as a most certain fact, which they proved daily, both by miracles wrought in his name, and by appealing to antient prophecies, in the holy scriptures, which they clearly and fully proved had their accomplishment in JESUS: and at the same time they earnestly called upon men to attend to this their testimony concerning JESUS, and persuaded them

to believe it. 2. They did not preach man's free will, or power to help himself out of his fallen state, nor dropped a word in favour of it; but their doctrine plainly supposed the contrary, and was an absolute denial of it; which also they fully disproved, and in express terms condemned, as being a doctrine contrary to truth and godliness: for all things are of GOD, who will have mercy on whom he will have mercy; "and therefore, of his own will, he begat us with the word of truth."^a 3. They did not preach Moses or the law, as having the least power to help man out of his lost condition; nor did they so much as once intimate that any, or all of the innumerable and costly sacrifices, oblations, &c. which had been offered to GOD since the time of Moses, could at all purge the conscience of guilt, or justify from sin before GOD; but they declared their utter insufficiency, and that no relief was to be had from that quarter: nor did they at any time preach the *moral* law, as "a ministration of life," or that which had the least power to help the sinner out of his guilt and misery; but, on the contrary, they declared it to be "the ministration of death^b;" and that all sinners were condemned by it, and held under the curse of it, as transgressors: yea, the whole Jewish ritual and ceremonial law was evidently built and founded on this supposition; that man had broken, and lay helpless under the curse of the moral law: much less in their preaching did they lead men to infidel moralists and philosophers for direction and help towards the saving of the soul: — For he that is dead, as all men spiritually by nature are, cannot quicken himself: and that which attempts to give relief to fallen man, but utterly perisheth in the

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attempt,

^a Jam. i. 18.^b 2 Cor. iii. 6—9.

attempt, (as may be said of all the legal sacrifices) cannot save another : and that law which condemns the offender (as the moral law doth all men because of sin) cannot also acquit, and justify him : And he that is blind, and going himself the way to destruction, can never guide another in the way to salvation : Therefore they wisely and faithfully preached, neither themselves, nor the law, nor the wisdom of the heathen. But, 2. They preached “ JESUS CHRIST, the Son of GOD^c,” who died, and rose again ; “ whom GOD hath set forth to be “ a propitiation for sin thro’ faith in his blood^d,” “ that he might be for salvation unto the ends of “ the earth^e.” Thus they preached, as GOD had commanded them, even JESUS, the Son of GOD, because there is in him, and in no other, salvation for mankind ; and this salvation also is only to be had and obtained thro’ the knowledge of CHRIST ; or believing in him ; which faith cometh by hearing the word of GOD, and hence the necessity of preaching CHRIST. But our text says, that they were teachers, as well as preachers of JESUS CHRIST ; i. e. they first instructed the people in the knowledge of CHRIST, that they might understand who he was, and what he had done, and what concern they had with him. This Peter did, and Paul also, as we find it recorded in the 2d and 13th chapters of the Acts. And when they had plainly declared, and testified who JESUS was ; they then, secondly, preached CHRIST, or, as the Greek word is, “ evangelized JESUS CHRIST,” unto them ; that is, they preached the glad tidings of peace with GOD, and of redemption from sin, and death, and hell, by the atoning blood, and resurrection of JESUS CHRIST.

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^c 2 Cor. i. 19.

^d Rom. iii. 25.

^e Acts xiii. 47.

First, then, they taught or instructed the people in the knowledge of CHRIST, that they might know both the dignity and mystery of his person; that JESUS, the son of man, was also the son of GOD: he was not of the earth earthy; as all other men are by nature, who descend from Adam by ordinary generation; but he was the Lord from heaven. And when this divine person, the eternal WORD, was made flesh, he was Jehovah incarnate, both GOD and man in one CHRIST. They likewise instructed the people in the knowledge of his work and undertaking; what he came down from heaven for, and why he was made man; and what he did and suffered in the earth, and that he was the true CHRIST of GOD, promised in the scriptures of the prophets, whom their fathers and themselves (especially at that time) expected, and were looking for: and that he was the substance of all their types and sacrifices, of all their offerings and purifications. They also further instructed, and taught the people in the knowledge of his offices; that he was anointed of GOD to be the saviour of the world; and as such was anointed to be both Prophet, Priest, and King, in Zion: and that the anointing of their most eminent prophets, high priests, and kings, who were before him, were so many signs and figures of his future anointing, and that he was the antitype of them all, in whom they had their end and accomplishment: Who therefore, in the highest and fullest sense, is eminently called, THE LORD'S Anointed; MESSIAH, the CHRIST. Thus they taught and instructed the people in the knowledge of CHRIST; though not all, at once, but by degrees, and from time to time, as they were able to bear it: whereby the people were led truly and scripturally to conceive of him, both as

to his person, work, and offices. And as both the former are included, and shine forth more or less in the latter, that is, in his offices; I shall a little insist upon them. And,

1st, They instructed the people in the knowledge of CHRIST, as the great prophet of God and teacher of his church; and that however he made use of their ministry, whom he had authorized and commissioned to preach in his name; yet it was CHRIST himself that made the word preached powerful and efficacious, whensoever and wheresoever it proved effectual to the enlightning, converting, and saving of sinners. CHRIST then by his prophetic office is anointed of God, and appointed to instruct the people in the knowledge of their lost state; their natural guilt, impotence, and misery; he instructs them also in the knowledge of God, even the Father; and of the way of coming to God by him; to the end that such impotent sinners might have hope. This he did in his own person, and with his own mouth, when he was upon earth teaching and instructing the people; and thus the great salvation of God began at the first to be spoken by the LORD. But this his Spirit did before, by the mouths of all his holy prophets that have been since the world began, who testified beforehand of his coming, his sufferings, and his glory. And this the Spirit of CHRIST still doth, and always will do unto the end of the world. Thus he concurs with the preaching of his faithful ministers, and gives efficacy to his word spoken by them, as he hath promised; and he likewise accompanies with his blessing, the reading of it, unto the opening our understanding, that we may understand the scriptures which testify of him, causing us to apprehend aright, and also to apply, and feed upon
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the truths and excellencies of the precious promises of GOD therein, whereby he plainly shews, demonstrates, and convinces us of the necessity both of turning to GOD and of believing on CHRIST, that we may have pardon and life through his name. This is the "anointing our eyes with eye-salve that we may see:" for this he sent his servant Paul to our heathen forefathers, and gave him power and authority to preach salvation to them in his name, and through faith in his blood; promising at the same time, that he would be with him to give his word success, and make it effectual to the end for which he sent it; which was "to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan under GOD."

For this cause also the Spirit of the Lord with which JESUS was anointed, rested upon him: even the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord: wherefore he saith, "awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and CHRIST shall give thee light:" until CHRIST therefore, by virtue of his prophetic office enlightens fallen man, "he abideth in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth:" and if he come not to CHRIST to be taught of him, and receive light from him, (which the proud Pharisees who say we see, will not) everlasting darkness must be his portion: therefore CHRIST, and none but CHRIST, is the true light; and he is "the wisdom of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth:" I say to every one that believeth; for if when you hear CHRIST thus set forth in the word, or preached unto you according to the word, you should reject and make light of him; the word preached will not profit

you: therefore we ought to give the most earnest heed to the things which we hear concerning CHRIST, and the salvation of GOD in him; for “He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

2dly, CHRIST was anointed to be a priest to his church and people. Now the office of an high priest is to offer sacrifice for sins, and to pray for, and bless the people: all these CHRIST did on earth; and the first part of it, even that of offering himself a sacrifice for the sins of the people he finished upon the cross; but that of praying for, and blessing the people, he continues to do in heaven, where he appears and makes intercession for us before GOD: nor will he ever cease to do this as our great high priest and advocate in heaven, until by his word and Spirit he hath gathered together in one, i. e. in himself, all the children of GOD that are scattered abroad. That part of our LORD's priestly office, when he suffered for us in the flesh the just for the unjust, that he might expiate our sins and bring us to GOD; was indeed, expedient for our redemption, and therefore the consideration of it is most profitable and precious to our souls; but to himself it was the most distressing, excruciating, and ignominious part of it: yet he freely came, and willingly offered himself, because he loved the Father who sent him, and whose will he came to do; and because also he loved righteousness and hated iniquity; for by this amazing act of his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, he was to bring an everlasting righteousness into the world and establish it; and at the same time, to condemn sin, and utterly destroy it: he likewise willingly came and offered himself for the sins of the people, because he loved them
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with a love that surpasseth knowledge; that thro' his death, he might redeem them from sin and hell, and bring them safe to GOD and glory reconciled in himself. Therefore JEHOVAH laid on him the iniquity of us all, and he verily bare our sins in his own body on the cross, which he put away by the sacrifice of himself. The blood also which CHRIST our high priest shed (for without shedding of blood there is no remission) was not the blood of bulls and of calves, but his own blood, whereby GOD is eternally reconciled to sinners in CHRIST, his justice is fully satisfied, and the sins of men are for ever expiated: therefore when CHRIST had by himself through death, purged our sins, a way was then opened, and prepared for the free access of sinners, in righteousness, unto the throne of GOD; which by being sprinkled with the blood of CHRIST, is now become a throne of grace; through him therefore we are warranted by the word of truth, and exhorted to come boldly to this throne of grace, which is the throne of GOD, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need: for GOD hath set forth his Son JESUS CHRIST to be a propitiation for sin through faith in his blood, that he might be just in the pardoning of our sins, and the justifier of him which believeth in JESUS: thus CHRIST offered himself, through the eternal Spirit, without spot to GOD, that by his blood, all that believe, might have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and purged from dead works to serve the living GOD, and not come into condemnation any more for ever: "For by one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified;" whereof also, the Holy Ghost is a witness unto us, for he saith, "their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more."

Now when CHRIST had thus suffered for sinners, and reconciled them unto GOD thro' his death; being raised from the dead on the third day, according to the scriptures, he ascended to the Father, and with his own blood entered into heaven itself, there to perform and finish the other part of his priestly office; even that of personally appearing before GOD with the blood of his sacrifice, which he had offered on earth; and also of praying for the people which he had purchased with his own blood: and then to bless them from thence. On this part of his priestly office, viz. his appearing and interceding for us in heaven, depends the application of the benefits of his death and resurrection to his ransomed people: here he acts as an advocate and intercessor for us before GOD, where he opposes the virtue of his blood and sufficiency of his oblation, against all that the law can justly charge us with: by this also, the mouth of the adversary, the accuser of the brethren, (i. e. of all CHRIST's redeemed people) is stopped; for the blood of CHRIST appearing for us in heaven, makes it clear and plain, that it is an act of justice and faithfulness, as also of glorious mercy in GOD, to pardon the sins of them for whom CHRIST died, and to justify, as he hath promised, all that believe on his name; therefore he is always heard for us, and we in him, for his name's sake, for he is worthy: hence the apostle, triumphing in CHRIST, challenges any one, if he be able, to bring a just charge or indictment into the court of heaven, against the chosen of GOD, whom CHRIST hath redeemed, and justified by his blood: "Who, saith he, shall lay any thing to the charge of GOD's elect? it is GOD that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? it is CHRIST that died, yea rather that is
" risen

“risen again, who is even at the right-hand of
“GOD, who also maketh intercession for us.”
And hence the saints are said to overcome satan by
the blood of the lamb, and by the word of their
testimony; i. e. by their confessing, and testifying
that JESUS is the only Lord and Saviour of sinners,
and cleaving to him alone, and depending on him
for life and salvation. Wherefore JESUS, the great
apostle and high priest of our profession is able to
save unto the uttermost all that come unto GOD
by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession
for them; and this he actually doth by blessing
them from heaven, which is the last part of his
priestly office, and is the true and proper applica-
tion of the benefits of his death, resurrection, and
intercession. This blessing of our glorious high priest
and Lord, is a solemn pronouncing of them blessed
and pardoned, with authority from the Father,
through his dying and interceding for them; and
this he doth by his word and spirit; whereby that
which CHRIST hath done for them, and is freely
given to them of GOD, through his worthy name,
is discovered, revealed, and applied unto them with
divine consolation; with joy and peace in believing.
Thus GOD having raised up his Son JESUS, sends
him in the ministry of the gospel to bless us in
turning away every one of us from our iniquities.

3dly, CHRIST the Saviour of sinners is anoin-
ted to be king in Zion. GOD hath given him to be
head over all things to his church, and hath set
him above all his and their enemies: “All power,
“saith he, is given unto me both in heaven and in
“earth;” therefore he hath a name written,
“King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” This
kingly office of CHRIST is as necessary for his being
a compleat Saviour, as any of the former; for satan
knows

knows that CHRIST, by his blood, hath obtained eternal redemption for sinners of mankind, and that whoso cometh to him he will in nowise cast out, and that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins, and have eternal life. The adversary therefore, from his entire hatred and malice against GOD, and his CHRIST, and the salvation of mankind; is perpetually seeking by all his devilish wiles, and power, and terrors to prevent men from hearing of CHRIST, and knowing any thing about him: for he also knows from the scripture and revealed faithful word of GOD; that notwithstanding the death, resurrection and intercession of CHRIST, none will ever be saved or receive eternal benefit thereby, who continue ignorant of GOD, and obey not the gospel of CHRIST: whatever men know besides, whatever schemes and methods of saving themselves men devise, and fall upon; if they do not come to CHRIST, and depend alone upon him for salvation, it will avail them nothing. And here the enemy of souls hath great advantage over fallen man; because all men by nature are ignorant of GOD and CHRIST, and filled with prejudices against the gospel, whose hearts also are strongly disposed to the pursuits of present and worldly enjoyments: for notwithstanding convictions of conscience, legal threatnings and occasional terrifying fears; yet thro' pride and lust, ambition and covetousness, they are carried on, as it were, headlong into sin and carnal pleasures: and thus satan, that great murderer of souls, and deceiver of mankind; by his lies and subtilty persuades and engages multitudes to stifle convictions, and alarms of conscience, and even to slight the holy scriptures, or to cavil at them: Satan also prevails with many writers and preachers by their corrupt comments
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and glosses, so to darken and misrepresent scripture truths, as to make them, in a great measure, useless to the readers and hearers that receive these glosses along with them.

The world also, by the lusts of the flesh, and the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, favours and strengthens all the devil's designs and lies to ruin immortal souls, by keeping them asleep in their ignorance and sottishness; whereby they are upheld in their contempt of the scriptures: And as satan, the god of this world, promises them great honors and pleasures in pursuing after it's preferments and delights; the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, and in utter darkness, readily catches at the bait, and falls in with the tempter's designs; "for every imagination of the heart of man is only evil continually." Thus all men, by nature, are "wise to do evil, but to do good, they have no knowledge." But that God, who hath said, "I will work, and who shall let it: my counsel shall stand; I will do all my pleasure:" who doeth whatsoever pleaseth him among the armies of heaven, and all the inhabitants of the earth: That God, I say, even the Lord Almighty, hath exalted his Son Jesus, and hath given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given to him. JEHOVAH hath also promised him, saying, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." And again he saith, "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." Now as JESUS is GOD's appointed King in Zion, and invested with absolute and universal power, both in heaven and earth; he can, and doth dislodge satan from his strongest hold in the hearts of fallen men, and so deliver the poor captive soul from the power of darkness, delusion,
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and error; and also change his insensible heart of stone, into a relenting contrite heart of flesh: He at the same time can, and doth make him sincerely willing to be saved from sin, and this present evil world, as well as from the wrath to come; and to seek, above all things, the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; desiring to know nothing so much as CHRIST crucified, and the power of his resurrection, that he may be filled with the love of CHRIST, and the salvation of GOD, which is in him. Now all this CHRIST doth by the power of his Spirit, and generally through the preaching and hearing of faith, i. e. by the doctrine of forgiveness of sins, and eternal life through faith in his name. The world and satan therefore in vain attempt to hinder the preaching of CHRIST, and the conversion of sinners: for the LORD GOD omnipotent, whose kingdom ruleth over all, hath exalted JESUS with his own right hand, to be a prince and a saviour; before whom his enemies are scattered, and even perish at his presence: for the words of GOD, the arrows of the Almighty, are sharp in the hearts of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under him. Who then can frustrate the counsels of heaven, or hinder the conversion and salvation of GOD's elect? CHRIST saith that he will have his ransomed people, ("all that the Father giveth me shall come to me") who are unjustly held in bondage by the world and satan: and the Lord Almighty saith, that he shall have them; for he gave them into his hand to be redeemed by him, and he hath bought them with his own blood, and they, saith GOD, shall never perish, but have eternal life. Thus infinite wisdom, love and power, stand engaged by covenant and by oath, to save GOD's chosen in CHRIST,

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the purchase of his blood : and who or what shall be able to hinder it ? The world, and satan, allure and tempt, frown and rage ; and ever will do so, in order to prevent it : but the very thing which they mean to prevent, GOD, in his wonderful providence, will cause their impotent malice and opposition to further and effect, by the clear displays of the word of his grace, and by the effectual operations of the Spirit of his might.

And by the same kingly power of CHRIST, doth he continue to defend and protect his converted faithful people, as they are following him, through faith and patience, unto his glorious heavenly kingdom. The Lord shall go before them, and the GOD of Israel shall be their rereward. None of the stratagems or attempts of their enemies shall ever succeed against the true soldiers of CHRIST : he is the captain of their salvation ; and none can declare or engage in a war with the saints, but they must also make war with the Lamb, and with his Father, GOD Almighty : For to his faithful church, Jehovah saith, “ I will be an enemy to “ thine enemies, and an adversary to thine adversaries.” Neither shall our own inbred, and yet indwelling sins, prevail against us ; but these also CHRIST will subdue in us, and for us ; as it is written, “ He will subdue our iniquities : ” and again he hath promised, saying ; “ Sin shall not “ have dominion over you, because ye are not “ under the law, but under grace.”

Having then declared how the apostles taught the people CHRIST, by instructing them in the knowledge of his person, work, and offices : I proceed,

Secondly ; to shew in what manner they *preached* CHRIST unto them. By teaching, they plainly discovered who he was, and what he had done,
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and how he was anointed of GOD to be both LORD and CHRIST. But by preaching, or *evangelizing* JESUS CHRIST, they did, as it were, apply CHRIST, and his glorious benefits, unto them: For GOD, say they, having raised up his Son JESUS, hath sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you away from his iniquities: And they further testified, that this word of salvation was not sent to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles also; which, when the Gentiles heard, they were glad, and glorified GOD for his mercy. Thus in evangelizing CHRIST, they preached unto sinners, grace, mercy, and forgiveness from GOD, in a way of righteousness, through faith in his blood: And they declared to their hearers also, that each of them had sufficient ground and warrant from GOD to receive these blessings, and believe on CHRIST for himself; whilst, at the same time, they warned every man not to neglect so great salvation. This then was a most encouraging doctrine; as the glorious gospel of the blessed GOD always is to the lost; the guilty and the helpless sinner. It is also a quickening doctrine to the dead in sins, and a saving doctrine to all that believe: for, by means of preaching and hearing the scripture-testimony of GOD concerning his Son JESUS; the eyes of the blind are opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped, and the spiritually dead quickened through the power of the Spirit of GOD, by whom also CHRIST is formed in the soul, and the heart purified by the faith of him. Now from this new creation of the soul of man, by the Word, Grace and Spirit of GOD, there arises a restless and constant desire of increasing more and more, in the true knowledge and love of GOD, and of the Lord JESUS CHRIST. This preaching then of glad tidings, and good news

to sinful men, by JESUS CHRIST, imported ; yea plainly declared, that man, by nature, was at enmity with GOD, and at a distance from him ; but that reconciliation and peace is made betwixt GOD and man by JESUS CHRIST : who therefore came into the world, and died, and rose again ; that sin, the enmity between GOD and man, might be destroyed, and sinners reconciled to GOD in him. And thus it is written, “ Ye who sometimes were “ afar off, are now made nigh by the blood of “ CHRIST.” But this salvation, which CHRIST hath brought into the world in righteousness, and by his own blood obtained for us, was the result of GOD’s everlasting love to man, “ according “ to his eternal purpose, which he purposed in “ CHRIST JESUS our Lord :” And therefore also it pleased GOD freely and graciously to promise a Saviour unto man, as soon as he had fallen by sin, and brought upon himself the curse of GOD’s righteous law. But the time of sending this promised saviour into the world ; GOD, in his wisdom, deferred for many ages ; that man, by long experience, might have the most clear, full, and convincing proof of his utter inability to save himself ; as also of the weakness of the law to help him out of his fallen state. And it was found, after the trial of thousands of years, that man, by his natural depravity, weakness and ignorance, was, instead of getting better, (by all the helps that this world, and carnal ordinances could afford him) growing worse and worse every day ; and at last had arrived at the most daring pitch of impiety, and sunk into the grossest darkness and sottishness imaginable. When therefore the Jews had almost universally corrupted and perverted the law, both moral and ceremonial, which GOD had given them ; and

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when the whole Gentile world, with all their boasted wisdom, had not been able to attain to the knowledge of the true God, but had fallen into the most gross and false imaginations, and abominable representations of the Godhead; together with the most vile and filthy practices: then it pleased God, who is rich in mercy, at that very period, called the fulness of time, which he had before appointed, to send his only begotten Son into the world, to be the healer of the breach between God and men. It is CHRIST therefore, that by his blood speaks peace to sinners in righteousness, who is mighty to save: for when none in heaven, or in earth, was found worthy or able to redeem, and rescue fallen man from sin and satan; he himself came down from heaven to deliver and save lost sinners from the curse of the law, and the bondage of hell: which by his own most precious blood, and glorious arm, he hath obtained and perfected for evermore. “For through death he “destroyed him that had the power of death, that “is, the devil:” And at the same time, by the blood of his cross, he expiated the sins of men, and reconciled them to God in himself: “for what “the law could not do in that it was weak thro’ “the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in “the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might “be fulfilled in us, who (have fled to him for refuge, and) walk no more after the flesh, but after the spirit.” Thus God was in CHRIST, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; “for he hath made him sin “for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made “the righteousness of God in him.”

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After this manner the apostles published and preached unto men remission of sins, and peace with GOD by JESUS CHRIST. So Paul at Antioch; be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe, both Jews and Gentles, are justified, cleared and acquitted; from all things, every kind and degree of sin and transgression; from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Let the sinner then no more seek, nor vainly hope to find relief from the law, or from any works of righteousness which he hath done: but let him (absolutely despairing of help from every other quarter) look unto JESUS for help: believe on him and thou shalt be saved. Though thy debt be ever so great, come unto CHRIST, and GOD, for his sake, will have mercy upon thee, and forgive thee all: for CHRIST hath already paid the uttermost farthing of all thou owest, and hath received also a full discharge for thee, whoever thou art that comest unto GOD by him. Let thy sins then be ever so numerous, and thy guilt ever so heinous, only believe in Christ, and thy soul shall live; for he hath suffered the just for the unjust that he might bring us to GOD: nor canst thou possibly meet with any disappointment, nor fail of being accepted with him; for the blood of CHRIST cleanseth from all sin; and he himself, who cannot lie, hath said; "Who so cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Thus the apostles evangelized JESUS CHRIST, or preached unto men, glad tidings through his name: and what message so suitable as this to the condition of fallen man? Or what news so good, and so great, could at any time have been sounded in their ears? Therefore the prophet, as in a transport of joy, sa-

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lutes the welcome messenger that brings it: "How beautiful, he cries (and all of his mind will do the same) how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tydings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tydings of good, that publisheth salvation." These certainly are glad tydings to the poor and needy sinner, to hear of peace with his justly offended creator, with the Almighty GOD; wherein is contained and held forth a free and full pardon of all our iniquities, transgressions and sins, by the sovereign grace of JEHOVAH, through the blood of his own Son JESUS CHRIST; which inestimable blessing every one that cometh to CHRIST, or believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, shall certainly receive. The gospel of CHRIST then proclaims and publisheth a free pardon to the greatest of criminals, to the chief of sinners: nor are they required to give, or do the least thing for it; but only to believe the testimony which GOD hath given of his Son: but in this faith is necessarily implied to the glory of GOD, a hearty confession of the equity and justice of their condemnation by the law, and of the sovereignty and freeness of that grace held forth to them in the gospel of CHRIST, whereby they are justified from all things. "It is therefore a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that JESUS CHRIST came into the world to save sinners." But perhaps some poor and doubting soul will be ready to say, is this salvation free for all? Is it an universal act of grace? And are there no persons excepted in it, and excluded the benefit of it? Take an answer in the very words of the heavenly proclamation, from the lips of, the King himself; and I beseech you mark well his words; which are as follows: "GOD so loved the world, that

“ that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.” And again he saith, “ Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest :” and again, “ If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink ;” and, “ whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely :” therefore none are excluded, but those that will not come to CHRIST ; and so by their rejecting the only Lord and Saviour exclude themselves from the benefit of his glorious grace and salvation.

And who they are that thus exclude themselves by their unbelief, is plain and manifest : even such as do not think themselves to be utterly destitute, and as guilty criminals justly condemned to die : and none indeed of these proud Pharisees who are rich in their own esteem, and righteous in their own eyes, and wise in their own conceit, will at any time (till they think otherwise) come to CHRIST : for he was sent and came into the world only to save the condemned, and the lost ; who in righteousness lay under the sentence and curse of the law, and could only be saved by an act of sovereign grace through his redemption : but to all that believe themselves to be ruined sinners, guilty and helpless ; to them the preaching of forgiveness of sins, and peace with GOD by JESUS CHRIST will be good news, and they will hear it. But may not those that come to CHRIST and are justified by faith in his blood, be afterwards seduced from the truth through the deceitfulness and power of sin and satan, so as to fall away and perish everlastingly ? No certainly : for GOD hath promised to keep them from thus falling finally ; “ and let GOD be true but every man a liar.” By the glorious covenant of grace GOD hath so fenced them in

on every side, and secured their standing in CHRIST, that they both cannot, and will not depart from him: for GOD hath said, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear into their hearts that they shall not depart from me." This is that "everlasting covenant which is ordered in all things and sure;" and these are the "SURE MERCIES of David." Wherefore he saith again, "The LORD is faithful who shall stablish you and keep you from evil." No one therefore that cometh to CHRIST, or with the heart believeth on him, shall ever be rejected by him, nor perish; for the LORD hath spoken it.

And upon no other ground did, or could the apostle say, "The LORD shall deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom;" and the prophet also speaks the same language; "Thou hast holden me, saith he, by my right-hand; thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory:" and again, speaking in the name of all the church of GOD which he hath purchased with his own blood, he saith; "This GOD is our GOD forever and ever, he will be our guide unto death." For how could they speak thus confidently of their own salvation; if it was at all suspended on any condition which might possibly fail in the performance? as it undoubtedly would were it left to the will, strength, and fidelity of men in any measure; but if it rests wholly and only upon the grace, power, and truth of GOD in CHRIST to save his people, it is as impossible that it should ever miscarry. For this cause also CHRIST is anointed of GOD, to be both prophet, priest, and king to his church and people; that he might not only redeem but quicken them;

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not only justify but sanctify them by his blood and Spirit; not only call them out from among men to follow him in the regeneration, but also keep them in the way and bring them safe to his Father's kingdom. And this he hath promised, and thus it is written, that we, through faith and patience, and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope: And without the teaching and assistance of the holy Spirit, we cannot so much as pray aright, much less can we walk aright, and least of all war aright, so as to vanquish our potent enemies, without his divine help and teaching: therefore although the saints of the most high, do willingly and actually, and perseveringly fight, the good fight of faith, against the world, the flesh, and the devil; yet it is only by the grace of GOD, and the blood of CHRIST, and the power of his Spirit, that they are heartily willing, and likewise able both to resist their spiritual enemies, and at last to overcome them: thus, "The salvation of the righteous is of the LORD, he is their strength in the time of trouble." To him therefore are we indebted for, and to him belongs all the praise of our salvation.

Lastly, I shall conclude with an application: And

I. I shall apply myself to professing Christians in general; but particularly to those of the church of England. You have heard from the scripture, that man by nature, is a child of wrath, utterly corrupt and sinful: that he is empty of all good, and full of all evil: and therefore he naturally lies under, and is obnoxious to the curse of GOD. This is the scripture account of fallen man; and to this the Protestant church of England bears witness in her ninth article, which declares, that "every one born into this world (of Adam's natural offspring) is of his own nature inclined to evil, and de-
"serveth

“serveth GOD’s wrath and damnation.” Therefore, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of GOD; consequently no one is, or can be a true Christian without this new birth, or new creation in CHRIST JESUS.

Neither hath fallen man any *free will*, or power in his natural state to turn himself to GOD; or, in other words, heartily to repent and obey the gospel: but as the tenth article of the church of England expresses it; “The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith, and calling upon GOD,” — “without the grace of GOD by CHRIST preventing him, that he may have a good will, and working with him when he hath that good will:” therefore also, no man living can be justified before GOD by any works or righteousness of his own; but by the obedience of CHRIST only, through faith in his blood: as it is written, by the obedience of *one* shall *many* be made righteous; and again, “CHRIST hath delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;” and again he saith, “to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” To this doctrine the church of England also bears testimony in the eleventh article as follows, “We are accounted righteous before GOD only for the righteousness of our Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, received by faith, and not for our own works or deservings; wherefore that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort;” who then that denies it can believe the former, i. e. the scripture; or be a true member of the latter, i. e. of the church of England? for this is not a circumstantial

cumstantial point, as are the ceremonies and external forms of discipline, but an essential article of the christian faith, and of the English protestant church. This doctrine also of justification by faith alone in JESUS CHRIST, hath a direct tendency to produce good works, and no other; for it purifies the heart, and worketh by love, and is therefore called "a most holy faith;" which also in the twelfth article of the church of England is described thus; "Good works are the fruits of faith, and follow justification,"—"and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit." And from hence it follows, that whosoever doth not good works and depart from iniquity hath no true faith in CHRIST; and it is likewise manifest from hence, that the enemies of justification by faith in CHRIST only, are enemies to good works also.

2. Let those among you that see and feel your sinful, helpless, lost state by nature; take encouragement from the glorious gospel of CHRIST: for he is able, and as ready to save every one of you that come unto him; despair not therefore, for you cannot miss of salvation, if you do not, through unbelief, turn away from CHRIST, and so dispute the veracity and truth of GOD's testimony concerning his Son JESUS CHRIST, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification: diligently consider and forget not that the blood of CHRIST cleanseth from all sin; and he in his word calls us to come unto him, that we may be cleansed therein; but you must not think to purify and fit yourselves for CHRIST before you believe in him; for it is not possible that you should make yourselves righteous, or a whit holier than you now are

are before you come to CHRIST; for he is both the justifier of the guilty and the sanctifier of the unclean; whose blood is as a fountain which GOD hath opened for sin and for uncleanness; therefore if you come to him just as you are, he will graciously receive you, and cleanse you from all your sins and filthiness: but if you come not thus to CHRIST, you never will, nor can come to him at all: neither will the most just and holy GOD reject us who thus come to him in CHRIST pleading, and presenting before him only the blood and name of his dear son; for he warrants and commands us in his word, to believe on him as the justifier of the ungodly through CHRIST JESUS: neither is CHRIST far from every one of us; for he is brought nigh to sinners by the gospel, that is, by the word of faith which we preach; wherefore he adds, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that GOD hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." And be assured, that thus coming to CHRIST, or believing on him, is the only way to be saved, both from the guilt and dominion of sin, and from the wrath to come: "For CHRIST is made of GOD unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption;" therefore, "let him that glorieth glory in the LORD:" and *whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

Now unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to GOD and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever. Amen.



F I N I S.

